

Tapir Conservation

The Newsletter of the IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group

Edited by Siân S. Waters and Stefan Seitz

(c) Kevin Burkhill



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The Baird's Tapir Project in Corcovado National Park, Costa Rica, represents the first long-term project to gather detailed, reliable information on the ecology of free-ranging tapirs. Initiated by Charles Foerster eight years ago, the study is using radio telemetry and direct observation to document home range size, activity patterns, habitat use, reproductive rate, offspring and adult sex ratios, offspring survival, juvenile dispersal, spatial distribution, population density and mortality rates of an intact tapir population. Up to now 27 different tapirs have been radio-collared and monitored. "Prima" in the photo is one of 13 offspring born during the study. She has now grown enough to be collared and is providing the study with valuable data. Photo by Charles Foerster

Printing and distribution of the Tapir Conservation Newsletter is supported by the Houston Zoo, 1513 N. MacGregor, Houston, Texas 77030, United States
<http://www.houstonzoo.org>



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Abbreviation: *Tapir Cons.*

Volume 11, Number 2, December 2002

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Production & Distribution

This issue is kindly sponsored by Houston Zoological Gardens, General Manager, Rick Barongi, 1513 North Macgregor, Houston, Texas 77030 USA.

Subscriptions

Members of the Tapir Specialist Group receive the newsletter free of charge.
Subscriptions for non-members are \$10.00 per year and can be obtained from Sheryl Todd, Tapir Preservation Fund, tapir@tapirback.com.

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Scope – This newsletter aims to provide information regarding all aspects of tapir natural history. Items of news, recent events, recent publications, thesis abstracts, workshop proceedings etc concerning tapirs are welcome.

Please include the full name and address of the authors underneath the title of the article.

Full-length articles on any aspect of tapir natural history should not be more than 15 pages in length (including references). An abstract is required and British English spelling is requested.

Figures and Maps. Articles etc can include black and white photographs, high quality figures and high quality maps and tables.

References. Please refer to these examples when listing references:

Journal Article

Herrera, J.C., Taber, A., Wallace, R.B. & Painter, L. 1999. Lowland tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) behavioural ecology in a southern Amazonian tropical forest. *Vida Silv. Tropical* 8:31-37.

Chapter in Book

Janssen, D.L., Rideout, B.A. & Edwards, M.S. 1999. Tapir Medicine. In: M.E. Fowler & R. E. Miller (eds.) *Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine*, pp. 562-568. W.B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, USA.

Book

Brooks, D.M., Bodmer, R.E. & Matola, S. 1997. *Tapirs: Status, Survey and Conservation Action Plan*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

Thesis/Dissertation

Foerster, C.R. 1998. *Ambito de Hogar, Patron de Movimiento y Dieta de la Danta Centroamericana (Tapirus bairdii) en el Parque Nacional Corcovado, Costa Rica*. M.S. thesis. Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica.

Report

Santiapilli, C. & Ramono, W.S. 1989. *The Status and Conservation of the Malayan tapir (Tapirus indicus) in Sumatra, Indonesia*. Unpublished Report, Worldwide Fund for Nature, Bogor, Indonesia.

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Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), in the person of the Programme Officer, Dr. Philip Miller, will be in charge of designing the format of the PHVA and producing the necessary support materials and final documents.

We will keep you posted about the results of the workshop and future actions in terms of Malay tapir conservation.

Patrícia Medici

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A Short Report from a Workshop on Tapir Conservation in Colombia

By Olga L. Montenegro

A national programme for tapir conservation has been developed under an inter-institutional agreement between the Colombian Ministry of the Environment and the Natural Science Institute of the National University of Colombia. This framework of the programme is within the Implementation of a National Strategic Plan for Endangered Species Conservation Project by the Ministry of the Environment. The preliminary version of the document, the National Programme for Tapir Conservation and Recovery in Colombia, comprises general information on tapirs, a summary of the current conservation status of the three tapir species found in Colombia – Baird's tapir, (*Tapirus bairdii*), mountain tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*) and lowland tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), and a proposed conservation programme. The summary includes information gathered from many sources - a national survey of regional environmental agencies, national parks, zoos, research institutions, several NGO's and individual researchers was an important source of up to date information. The proposed conservation and recovery programme includes short, medium and long-term goals and strategies. The preliminary version of this document was recently discussed during a national workshop held at the Flora and Fauna

Sanctuary Otún-Quimbaya in the central Colombian Andes on October 29th to 31st, 2002.



Fifty people attended the workshop and their main tasks were to discuss and compile a national programme with the national environmental system institutions and researchers. Participants included representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, regional autonomous environmental agencies, national parks, zoos, research institutions and universities. Tapir Specialist Group Chair, Patrícia Medici, and Deputy Chair, Charles Foerster, as well as most of the TSG Colombian members and other researchers attended the workshop. The first day consisted of invited presentations, which were as follows:

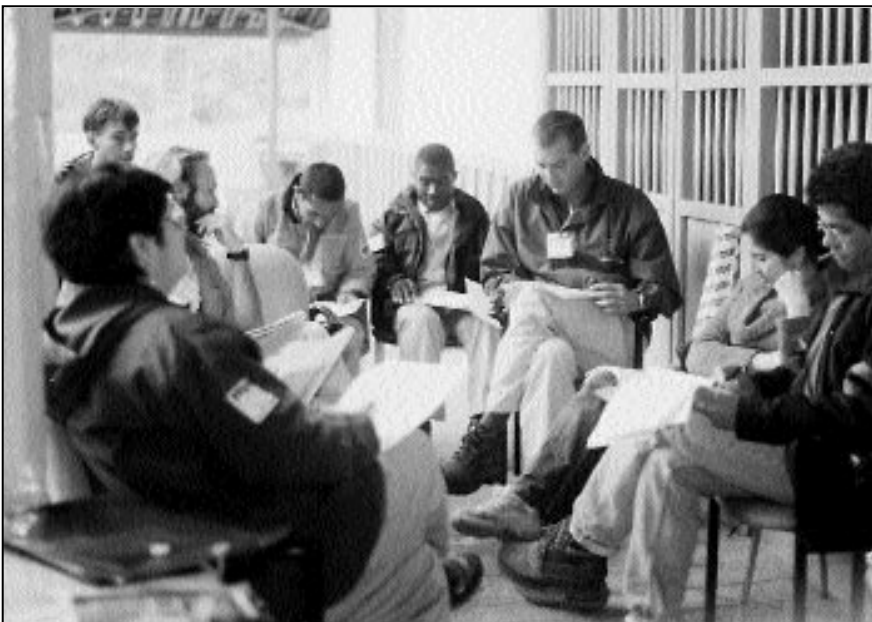
- Distribution records of tapir species in Colombia and the selection of priority areas for conservation, by Emilio Constantino, *Red de Reservas de la Sociedad Civil*
- Advances in molecular genetics and projections for the future, a short report sent by Dr. Manuel Ruiz, and presented by Franz Kastón, *Universidad Javeriana, Fundación APAS*
- Genetic aspects of the conservation of the genus *Tapirus* spp., a report by Javier Sarria *Universidade Estadual Paulista, Brazil* which was presented by Hugo López (*Universidad Nacional de Colombia*)
- The ecology of *Tapirus bairdii* in Costa Rica, by Charles Foerster. Tapir Project Leader, Costa Rica.
- *Tapirus bairdii* in Katios Natural National Park and its area of influence, by Héctor Restrepo, *Fundación Wii*.

- Home range and habitat requirements for *Tapirus terrestris*: - experiences from the Atlantic forest in Brazil, by Patrícia Medici, *Instituto de Pesquisas Ecologicas (IPE)*.
- Research overview and conservation priorities for *Tapirus pinchaque*, by Diego Lizcano, University of Kent.
- Conservation strategy for the woolly tapir in the region of Tolima, by Franz Kastón, *Fundación APAS*
- Tapir Specialist Group action perspectives for tapir conservation in the Neotropics, by Patrícia Medici, *Instituto de Pesquisas Ecologicas (IPE)*.
- Regional strategy and action plan for *Tapirus pinchaque* conservation at the Ucumari Natural Regional Park and Los Nevados Natural National Park, by Jaime A. Suárez, *Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira*.
- Mountain tapir in the Colombian eastern Andes, by Olga Montenegro. *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*
- An international project for mountain tapir conservation between the Cali Zoo and Los Angeles Zoo, by Jorge Gardezabal, Sérgio Sandoval and Carlos Valenzuela. *Zoológico de Cali and Zoológico de los Ángeles*
- The Ministry of Environment's policy framework concerning wildlife conservation, by Claudia Rodríguez. *Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, Colombia*
- Colombian Tapir Network, by Sérgio Sandoval
Tapirs at the La Paya Natural National Park, a spontaneous presentation by Harley Morales. La Paya Natural National Park.

The aim of inviting the speakers was to present a useful and enriching background to the discussions regarding the National Programme for Tapir Conservation and Recovery in Colombia, a document whose preliminary version had been sent to all the participants in advance.

The second day of the workshop started with a brief overview of the contents and background of the document, presented by Olga Montenegro. The rest of the day was dedicated to the discussion of the proposed national programme. For discussions, participants gathered in four groups: (1) for *Tapirus bairdii* and the subspecies *Tapirus terrestris colombianus*, (2) for *Tapirus pinchaque*, (3) for *Tapirus terrestris terrestris*, and (4) for *ex situ* conservation. Each of the first three groups had representatives of the regional autonomous environmental agencies and national parks whose areas were within the respective species distribution. Research institutions and researchers joined the groups which most corresponded to their field of expertise. Zoos and Ministry of Environment representatives formed the *ex situ* conservation group.

The results of these discussions were presented in a plenary session on the third day and additional discussions were held at this time. Finally, the workshop ended with a synthesis of the meeting and concluding remarks. Suggestions for the National Programme for Tapir Conservation and Recovery in Colombia that resulted from this workshop will be incorporated in the document. The Colombian Ministry of the Environment will, in the following months, publish the final version of this national programme. It is



Some of the participants in the mountain and lowland tapir discussion groups. From left to right: Stella Sarria, (Farallones de Cali National Park), Charles Foerster (TSG deputy-chair), César Rey (National Parks), Roberto Yepes (Katis National Park), Julio César Pérez (Utria National Park), Juan Camilo Restrepo (CORANTIOQUIA), Alba Morales (National University of Colombia) and Héctor Restrepo (Wii Foundation).

Photo by Olga Montenegro

expected that the programme will be implemented as a joint effort with the environmental institutions, some of them through inter-institutional agreements. It was proposed that a follow-up workshop to review advances in the implementation of the programme might be held in two years.

The 1997 version of the Tapir Action Plan (TAP) of IUCN is presently being revised and it was proposed that the National Programme for Tapir Conservation and Recovery in Colombia, once published by the Ministry of Environment, could be incorporated into the updated version of the TAP as the chapter from Colombia

This workshop was organized by the Ministry of Environment (Ecosystem Sub-Direction) and the Natural Science Institute of the National University of Colombia. Partial logistic support was provided by the Special

Administrative Unit of Natural National Parks. Besides all those institutions mentioned earlier, attendees represented the following institutions: regional autonomous agencies (CARDER, CAM, CRC, CVC, CORTOLIMA, CRQ, CORPONOR, CORANTIOQUIA); national parks (Katis, Utría, Farallones de Cali, Los Nevados, Las Hermosas, SFF Otún Quimbaya, Pisba, La Macarena-Tinigua-Picachos, La Paya, Amacayacu, Chiribiquete, Puinawai, Gestion and Tecnical Units), Zoos (Fundación Zoológico de Santa Cruz, Fundación Zoológico de Barranquilla, Zoológico de Matecaña) NGO's and research institutes (Fundación Natura, WWF Colombia, Instituto de Investigaciones Alexander von Humboldt).

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Current Project Updates

Baird's Tapir Project Corcovado National Park, Costa Rica

By Charles Foerster

November 2002 will mark the 8th anniversary of the Baird's Tapir Project in Corcovado National Park, Costa Rica. Initiated by Charles Foerster for his field study towards a Master's degree in Wildlife Management, the primary goal of the project is to enhance tapir conservation programmes throughout Central and South America by providing detailed, reliable information on the ecology of an undisturbed, non-hunted population of Baird's tapirs. The underlying philosophy is that through a better understanding of how an intact tapir population functions, we will be better equipped to identify and correct irregularities in those populations altered by human activities.

The study is using radio telemetry and direct observation to document home range size, activity patterns, habitat use, reproductive rate, offspring and adult sex ratios, offspring survival, juvenile dispersal, spatial distribution, population density and mortality rates of a tapir population near the Sirena Biological Station in Corcovado. In all, 27 different tapirs have been radio-collared and monitored during the

study. Currently, Charles is collecting data on 17 animals (4 adult females, 6 adult males, 3 juvenile females, and 4 juvenile males) in a 6-km² area.

Some of the projects results to date include the following. Thirteen offspring have been born to 5 adult females with a sex ratio of offspring: 46% male, 38% female and 15% of unknown sex. The annual birth rate per female has been 0.51 offspring/year and the average interbirth interval has been 20.9 months. Annual home range sizes for adult males, adult females and juveniles have been 136, 122 and 113 hectares, respectively. The density of adult tapirs in the study area has averaged approximately 1.6 individuals/km². On average the sex ratio of adult tapirs in the Sirena area has been 5 females (42%) to 7 males (58%).

As part of a larger project, Jim Norton, with the University of Illinois at Chicago, has been working on a genetic evaluation of the Sirena tapir population. Jim's work involves the initial assessment of genetic variability in wild and captive populations of Baird's tapirs. The results of Jim's project indicate that the tapir population in southern Costa Rica was most likely connected by gene flow to the population of tapirs in the Darien in Panama prior to fragmentation of habitat. It is most likely that the connection was indirect gene flow via intermediate populations that had probably